ETHICAL EDGE Insights

Coaching | Mentoring | Leadership

Championing Integrity And Inspiring Ethical Practice
Nurturing Wellbeing To Cultivate Sustainability.

EEi

Behind the Edge

Connect and Engage with us at **EEi**

Follow us : in ◉

Visit our website or email your feedback.

www.ethicaledgeinsights.com

Flourishing Ethics

How might integrity and ethicality shape your journey to a better life?

Champion Ethical Excellence, Shape the Future

COACHING
ETHICS
FORUM

Advancing Ethics in Coaching, Mentoring, & Leadership

www.coachingethicsforum.com

ETHICAL EDGE Insights (EEi): exploring the dynamic intersection of **Ethics, Wellbeing, Coaching, Mentoring** and **Leadership.** Our vision is to provide thoughtful insights and champion ethical practices that lead to **personal and professional growth** and **a sustainable future** for individuals and society.

JOIN US: Write, read, and be part of the ethical revolution.

Connect with us, share your thoughts, and explore how ethics can shape the future of leadership and wellbeing.

www.ethicaledgeinsights.com

EEi

Contents

Editors Note

Ethical Leadership: Coaching & Mentoring for Sustainable Wellbeing

Welcome to the inaugural ETHICAL EDGE Insights (EEi) issue, dedicated to Ethics in Coaching, Mentoring, and Leadership! We are thrilled to bring this exciting new publication to fruition, creating an interactive space dedicated to exploring and highlighting ethics in practice within our professional fields. Today marks the beginning of an incredible journey, and we are delighted to have you join us!

The magazine emerged from a multifaceted approach to addressing ethics in coaching, which includes the Coaching Ethics Forum (CEF) whose mission is to advance Ethics in coaching, mentoring and leadership. The Journal of Coaching Ethics (JoCE) and edited books on ethical practice, including "Positive Psychology Coaching in the Workplace," and The Ethical Coaches Handbook and Ethical Case Studies for Coach Development and Practice. There is an imperative to advance and integrate the science of wellbeing and ethics within coaching, mentoring, and leadership, which is what will move humanity towards sustainable outcomes.

We have designed a magazine with an expansive reach beyond coaching to include mentoring and leadership. The magazine's shape owes its crafting

and special thanks to a handful of sources: Robert Biswas-Diener inspired key sections and a handful of the CEF team for their various supports.

ETHICAL EDGE Insights (EEi) is not just another online magazine. This publication invites you to delve deep into your moral compass and professional life's ethical challenges, reflections and learnings. We encourage you to share your stories, insights, and questions, fostering a dynamic and engaging publication community. One of our standout features is the *Ask an Ethicist* section, where you can seek guidance from a professional ethicist on complex ethical musings and dilemmas, offering ethical insights.

Our magazine spans a range of thought-provoking sections designed to inspire and challenge. *Practice Insights* explores the practical applications of ethics in coaching, mentoring, and leadership, while *Ethics Education* delves into the ways we can learn, teach, and apply ethical principles in various contexts. In *Ethical Codes*, we examine changes to codes of ethics, as well as reflections and discussions about the relevance and application of these codes across industries.

We also feature *Conversations with Change-Makers*, offering a platform for inspiring leaders to share their journeys and insights. *Vanguard's Insights* provides cutting-edge perspectives on ethics, showcasing forward-thinking ideas and practices from interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary fields.

Our *Global Perspectives* section offers a broad view of ethics in action across cultures and continents. *Exclusive Features* highlight in-depth explorations of key ethical issues facing professionals today.

For those seeking inspiration from the written word, *The Shelf in Focus* highlights thought-provoking reads that touch on ethics, coaching, mentoring, leadership, and wellbeing. And for a bit of fun, our Ethical Sparks page offers bite-sized wisdom and thought-provoking ideas in an engaging, lighter format.

Understanding the critical challenges of our times and the central role of ethics is crucial for achieving best outcomes now and in the future. Ethics are fundamental in guiding our decisions and actions to ensure positive and sustainable outcomes. There is a need for open-minded dialogue, critical thinking, and virtuousness through thoughtful action. Ethics involve more than just personal virtue; they require a commitment to ethical decision-making that considers wellbeing, diversity, race, religion, culture, climate, character and the broader impact of our actions. This commitment affects our clients, organisations, the professional and personal landscape, and the wellbeing of the broader community.

We aim to inspire critical thinking about your role and influence and encourage ethical decision-making by fostering a community that supports change through sharing stories and reflections. Ultimately, this magazine aims to help, guide and cultivate courageous ethical decisions and actions in practice.

We are looking forward to receiving your stories, reflections and insights to reflection and learn from. Together we will cultivate a community dedicated to ethical excellence in coaching, mentoring, and leadership.

W.A Smith

Wendy-Ann Smith
Founder & Executive Edito

E: wendy-ann@eclorev.eu
W : www.coachingethicsforum.com
W: www.journalofcoachingethics.com
Li: https://www.linkedin.com/in/wendy-ann-smith/

"Ethics is the soul of leadership. True wellbeing begins when we align our values with our actions."

Ask An Ethicist

Welcome to Musings, where readers can submit their ethical dilemmas for thoughtful responses from our resident ethicist. Each issue, we explore real-world challenges, providing nuanced, reflective advice to spark meaningful discussion and offer fresh perspectives on ethics.

Moral Musings: Preferred Coaching Approach

> "I have a preference for a particular approach to coaching. There is however, little evidence to support this way of working. What ethical issues, if any, does this raise for me when discussing my approach with clients?"
>
> ~ David A Lane

Reflecting on Your Choice of Approach

If you prefer an approach to coaching that doesn't have clear evidence supporting it, then the first thing to consider ethically is to think carefully and dispassionately about why you prefer this approach. This is not to suggest that the approach is necessarily ineffective or inappropriate. There might be good reasons why the approach, while not currently supported in the scholarly literature or by authoritative bodies, is nevertheless appropriate. It may be that the approach is new, or has proven difficult to test scientifically. It may be that you have had personal success with the approach many times previously, and are confident and experienced in your use of it. Or it may be an approach that works only in particular contexts, and you only use it in such cases.

Managing Bias and Ethical Risks

At the same time, it remains true that professionals are human beings, and subject to cognitive distortions like confirmation bias. Coaches might want an approach to be effective, or be so strongly invested in it being effective, that they might not appropriately seek out, consider and weigh evidence against it. So it is important to be especially rigorous and frank with yourself and your beliefs when using approaches that do not have a strong evidence-base.

As well, particularly if the approach is novel or not widely used, then it is important to consider if it raises any other ethical issues, especially any potential risks of harm. One virtue of widely-used approaches is that their risks or drawbacks will usually be widely known, and therefore able to be navigated. Novel and idiosyncratic approaches will not have this virtue, and careful thought is required to consider any ethical concerns that might arise in unexpected ways.

Setting Clear Client Expectations

Discussing the approach with clients does raise some ethical issues. An important consideration will be client expectations. In some contexts, it will be reasonable to think that the client will be satisfied that you are using the best approach, in your professional judgement, that is open to you. In that case, so long as your judgement is made in good faith, based upon a sound professional judgment, and in the client's best interests, the client's expectations will be met.

In other cases however, the client might have a natural expectation that their coach, as a professional, will be using the best evidence-based approach. In this situation, it will be important to have a clear discussion with the client about your reasons for using this particular approach, to be frank about the evidence for it, and to explain why in your professional judgment it provides a sensible way forward in this case. Failure to gain appropriate consent to the approach used, and to clarify client expectations, can constitute major failures of professionalism, and can ultimately lead to serious complaints being filed.

Securing Informed Consent

A particular danger in the case of coaching arises because the coach may feel tempted to overplay their confidence in, or the evidence-base for, a particular approach, to encourage the client to 'buy in' to the approach, and so to invest in the time, energy, resources and effort required to make the coaching effective. While this is an understandable temptation, the ethical priority must be to make sure that the client is as informed as possible about the approach and the professional's reasons for recommending it. Only on this basis can the client give informed consent.

Hugh Breakey
Ethicist & Moral Philosopher

LI: https://www.linkedin.com/in/hugh-breakey-37415a7a/

Dr Hugh Breakey is Deputy Director and Senior Research Fellow in moral philosophy at Griffith University's Institute for Ethics, Governance and Law (Brisbane, Australia). Hugh's work spans the philosophical sub-disciplines of political theory, normative ethics, applied philosophy, and legal theory. He has extensive experience in the application of ethical, legal, and political philosophy to a wide array of challenging practical fields, including institutional governance, integrity systems and corruption, climate change, sustainable tourism, peacekeeping, safety industries, property and intellectual property, professional ethics, human rights, and international law.

We invite you to submit your Ethical Musings!
Have a moral dilemma? Send us your question and be featured in our next issue!
Send your submissions to info@ethicaledgeinsights.com

Disclaimer: The advice provided in this section is intended for informational purposes only and should not be considered as professional legal or medical advice.

Practice Insights

Embracing AI in coaching: Commercial opportunity or existential threat?

It has to be true that artificial intelligence (AI) presents both a challenge and an opportunity for individual coaches and the profession as a whole. Some of the pros and cons are clear, and it's worth considering the times we're in through an ethical lens.

Sam Isaacson

Technology increasingly reaches its tendrils into every aspect of our lives. I wrote recently about how we've effectively become cyborgs as our identity finds itself increasingly captured in our digital presence and how this matters with our coaching clients. It's no wonder, therefore, that our profession is experiencing a transformation that could redefine the nature of coaching relationships. It feels like we're reminded every week that we will be displaced if we don't create digital versions of ourselves, often by those selling products and courses that will apparently protect us against the mass extinction event coaches are blindly heading towards.

The Ethical Imperative

We all know that coaching has historically been limited to those who can personally afford it or are in positions where their employers will invest in it. The term '*the democratisation of coaching*' has picked up plenty of baggage as it's become more a marketing slogan than a desire for positive change driven by a heart of fairness. However, the need for our profession to reach more than the already highly privileged is real. A desire that coaching might one day be accessible for the entire planet and not the top 1% of earners isn't a Marxist ideology that should be shouted down; it's simply the right thing to aim for.

The sharpest end of AI in the coaching space truly offers the chance to democratise access to coaching. AI coaching platforms, including for example, AIcoach.chat, the AI coaching platform I've played a significant role in developing, genuinely offer good-quality, non-directive coaching

on demand and at a terrifyingly affordable price. The potential attraction of that as a competitive advantage naturally carries with it the risk of it becoming a magnet for venture capitalists looking to make a good return on investment. Still the outcome is surely a moral imperative in our increasingly unequal world.

Generative AI presents many potential ethical dilemmas; Passmore and Tee (2023) identify thirteen in their paper on GPT-4 and there are surely others. Within an organisational context this is even more complex, given ethical questions around confidentiality and ownership of the data created in AI coaching conversations (Terblanche, 2024).

Despite these, and the opacity that prevents us from understanding why it might be acting in certain ways, one of the key advantages of AI in coaching is the consistency it offers. A pool of human coaches, however skilled they might be, are inherently going to be inconsistent from session to session. The relative consistency of AI ensures that all users receive a level of experience that sits within a reasonably tight and defined spectrum. Particularly in bigger, more stable organisations where uniformity and predictability in employee development are desirable, consistency can sometimes be more attractive than quality. And when specialist AI coaches seem capable of delivering at least as significant outcomes as human coaches (Terblanche et al., 2022; Isaacson et al., 2024) but at a fraction of the price, this shouldn't be underestimated.

There are other benefits; all of technology generically presents opportunities for efficiency, consistency, scale of impact, scope expansion and sustainability (Isaacson, 2021). Knowing that these opportunities exist and not wanting to make the most of them could be considered to sit somewhere between folly and negligence, but of course, the picture is more complex than that.

The Risk Landscape

Things go wrong with technology all the time, and AI's reach amplifies its potential to negatively affect the world of coaching. The ICF specifically mentions this as a reason why they developed their first draft framework and standard for AI coaching (ICF, 2024). Some of these risks are generic, while others are specific to how an AI tool has been designed, configured, and applied.

Many of these risks are misunderstood or misrepresented in the discussion that has emerged in our profession. AI can be criticised, for example, for lacking the depth, empathy and relational nuance that human coaches bring, but this is a dangerous path to take. However true it might be that the technology is consistently and rapidly improving in its ability to present ever-more convincing illusions, and the role AI can play often doesn't need that sort of ability.

AI is fantastic at accelerating time-consuming administrative tasks. Turning a 500-word biography into a 100-word version will take a fraction of the time a human would spend on the same task. Creating a 20-page proposal deck template might take a human half a day, but AI 30 seconds. And turning ChatGPT into an on-demand coach mentor to aid in reflective practice takes no time at all.

At the moment and for the foreseeable future AI cannot be a replacement for a human coach, unless said human coach is trying to differentiate themselves by competing on price alone.

The Future Of AI In Coaching

The development of AI, in general and in the coaching profession, represents a step towards more diverse, inclusive, efficient and scalable business models. By addressing the ethical considerations and leveraging the strengths of AI, we can collectively create a future where high-quality coaching is accessible to all without reducing the impact of what we're currently providing.

As the technology industry continues to innovate and we continue to respond, let's remain mindful of the unique contribution we bring – I like to use the word 'magic' to describe that – and strive to integrate AI where it makes sense, to enhance rather than replace the human foundations of coaching.

Image: Created by Sam Isaacson using Leonardo

References

ICF. (2024). *Artificial Intelligence (AI) Coaching Framework and Standard vo.16.*

Isaacson, S. (2021). *How to Thrive as a Coach in a Digital World: Coaching with Technology.* McGraw Hill-Open University Press.

Isaacson, S., Kong, S., Leech, D. & Tee, D. (2024). *Unlocking potential: AI coaching in the NHS.*

Passmore, J. & Tee, D. (2023). Can Chatbots like GPT-4 replace human coaches: Issues and dilemmas for the coaching profession, coaching clients and for organisations. *The Coaching Psychologist, 19 (1).* pp. 47-54

Terblanche, N. (2024). *Artificial intelligence coaching chatbots,* in Passmore, J., Diller, S., Isaacson, S. & Brant, M. (Ed). The Digital and AI Coaches' Handbook, 101-109. Routledge.

Terblanche, N., Molyn, J., de Haan, E. & Nilsson, V. O. (2022). Comparing artificial intelligence and human coaching goal attainment efficacy. *PLoS ONE 17(6): e0270255.*

Sam Isaascon

E: sam@isaacson.uk
W: www.isaacson.uk
LI: linkedin.com/in/samisaacson

Sam Isaacson is an independent coach and consultant, co-founder of AIcoach.chat and founder of the Coachtech Collective, a global community of coaches curious about the impact of technology. He writes widely around the intersection of coaching with technology, including most recently as co-editor of The Digital and AI Coaches' Handbook and in his popular LinkedIn newsletter Coaching with Sam Isaacson, and he is co-presenter of The Future of Coaching with Technology podcast.

JoCE
JOURNAL of COACHING ETHICS

www.journalofcoachingethics.com

Ethics Education

Ethics -- a Cinderella topic in coach education

Ethics in coach education are about much more than making people aware of the Codes of Ethics. It's about ensuring that coaches know how to work with complex ethical dilemmas and are able to take a critical perspective on the ethicality of their practice. It's also about the ethics involved in being an education provider or a professional body.

David Clutterbuck

Recently, Kirsten Dierolf, Bob Garvey and I wrote an article with the title "What if everything we thought we knew about coach education were wrong?" (2024). Our intent was to examine the evidence base for prevalent approaches to coach training and the practical implications for both coaches and for the various professional bodies. Our broad conclusion was that the assumptions behind some competency frameworks were largely unevidenced (or directly contradictory to the evidence). We drew on the work of the Coach Maturity Research group, which explored the developmental path of a substantial sample of highly experienced coaches, recommended by their peers (Rajasinghe, Garvey, Smith, et al., 2022).

Among the concerns raised were:

- Coach education, driven by accreditation approaches, focuses on doing and following prescribed processes. Mature coaches focus more on *being* – they recognise that following a process is often not in the client's best interests and limits the value they can add.

- Coach education is dominated by cultural assumptions from North America, often marginalising other cultures.

- Accreditation of coach training focuses on how well the programme covers key competencies or themes. It generally takes no account of *what else* a provider may decide to include. An analysis by Kirsten of ICF accredited courses found an alarming proportion that included dubious content (such as a heavy reliance on NLP). No analysis was made of other bodies, but this appears to be a challenge for all of them.

These are all ethical issues that should be of significant concern to both practitioners and

educators in coaching, on whom coaching bodies have a significant role of influence – not least because of the ethical risk. This risk extends to all the stakeholders, of whom the principal ones are the coaching bodies, coach educators, coaches, clients and the wider social environment. Let's look at each of these in turn:

The coaching bodies

Tens of thousands of new coaches enter the market every year, many without extensive coach skill training or education or accreditation. For those, who do attend training and achieve accreditation, what is an appropriate balance between taught coaching tools or techniques and being taught the ethics of when and how to use them? The coaching relationship is one of power and power needs to be exercised wisely. Coaching codes of conduct provide some level of guidance, but cannot substitute for the complexity of real-world situations that arise. As I write, a correspondence stream on Linked In is highly critical of an educational programme advertised as increasing coaches' understanding of ethics. It simply works through and "explains" the intent behind one of the two main codes of conduct. Not surprisingly the main reaction in the on-line exchanges is anger at being short-changed.

To be fit and ready for the complexity of ethical dilemmas, coaches need at a minimum to experience a wide spectrum of relevant case studies, so that ethical responses are built into how they practice, rather than a bolt-on they have to look up in the manual when they run into difficulties.

None of the coaching bodies yet provides clear guidance to educators on what ethical competence they should be developing in students, nor on the relative importance of ethical versus technical competence.

Another related issue is what I call "educational adulteration". By this I mean the inclusion in the curriculum of unevidenced, fringe therapies or theory. For example, while some tools and techniques from NLP can be helpful to a coach, much of general NLP practice is manipulative and contrary to the client-centred ethos of coaching. (An attempt was made a few years ago to register "astrological coaching". The professional body blocked it on the grounds of damage to reputation. What's lacking from all of the professional bodies is a system of formal oversight – or a code of practice – that would provide guidance to educators.

All the main professional bodies are committed to ethical practice. My own experience of taking an issue to one of the bodies was that the procedures were adequate for purpose – they worked! Yet the number of cases brought each year is minute compared to the size of the coach population. And very few of the cases brought for adjudication relate to behaviour by educators. A while ago, a coach brought to supervision the reason she was quitting a role with a coach educator – "they never fail anyone, no matter how incompetent they are". It did not occur to her to take the issue to any of the several professional bodies accrediting those courses.

The role of ethics committees may also need an overhaul. Are they there to pass judgement on ethical misdemeanour or to promote ethical thinking? Should members be encouraged to bring ethical issues to stimulate wider consideration, without any context of fault or blame? Should ethics committees require registered coach supervisors to complete periodical surveys describing ethical issues coaches have brought to them? In short, should they be proactive, rather than reactive?

Questions to the professional bodies therefore include:

- Where ethical guidance should be provided to educators and how?
- How can we encourage more ethical issues to be brought to adjudication?
- How can and should we disseminate the learning from adjudications?
- How should the ethics of the professional body itself be reviewed? (For example, what are the ethics of requiring tutors on courses accredited by a body to be paid-up members of that body?)

Coach educators

When we talk to students on coaching courses, one of the most common complaints is that they have been oversold. There are still many courses that make misleading claims about outcomes. There is a big difference between, say "you will be a competent team coach" and "you will have laid down the foundations for becoming a competent team coach". Accreditation processes sometimes don't help, because they fuel the myth of instant competence. There is an argument for revisiting the ethical contract to move away from instant capability towards a longer-term journey of self-evolution.

A dilemma for coach educators is that they have to

cover in a relatively short time a list of topics required by the coaching bodies. Not only are these sometimes contradictory (if you want the course to be accredited by more than one body, as is frequently the case) but they can focus attention on *doing* coaching, rather than *being* a coach – so ethical development gets far less time than is desirable.

The emphasis on doing raises a rapidly growing issues for coach educators. AI-assisted coachbots can deliver basic coaching routines at least as effectively as early-stage coaches using simplistic models, such as GROW. So, are we educating coaches only for them to become obsolete in the near future?

> **Critical ethical questions to coach educators therefore include:**
>
> - Is ethical development just a tick box element, or core to the whole curriculum?
> - To what extent are you equipping new coaches for the technology enabled future?

Individual coaches

The arguments above, relating to AI, have ethical implications for coaches, too. Most coaches want to provide services that support the wellbeing and growth of their clients Even if no actual harm is caused, is it ethical for a coach to continue to practice, when the client's best interests would be better served through a conversation with a coach AI? What education should coaches be seeking that will enable them to keep ahead of AI? At a minimum they will need a deeper knowledge of the science of well-being (Smith, Boniwell & Green, 2021), for example. Currently, coaches in training are passive participants in a triangle of professional bodies, educators and themselves. What are their responsibilities in influencing the shape and content of coaching courses?

Critical issues for coaches include:

- The tension between how the coach likes to coach (or thinks they should coach) and how the client learns best. If coaching is intended to be client-centred, how ethical is it for the coach to decide what the client needs?
- Over-promising by coaches. What level of change can six sessions of coaching *really* bring about in a client – and how durable will it be?
- The needs of the client and those of their sponsors and stakeholders. Is it ethical to coach the client without consideration of the client ecosystem?

- When should coaches walk away from assignments on ethical grounds? What might those grounds be?

When these issues are not covered in the coaching curriculum, it's not just the training provider that is at fault. The student coach also bears some responsibility, by failing to ask appropriate questions. (Reflection: if you can't ask these difficult questions during training, what does that imply for the quality of your subsequent coaching practice?)

Retiring executives, who want to continue to contribute to society, are increasingly reluctant to become coaches – not least because they want to use and be valued for the immense experience they have accumulated over their careers. Professional mentoring offers an alternative second career – one that takes them into neither the advice-giving of consultancy, nor the straight-jacket of formulaic coaching.

An ethical challenge here is *what is an appropriate use of self?* Much coach education advocates minimising the intrusion of the coach's self into the conversation. Yet Gestalt approaches have proven remarkably powerful in proving client insights. Similarly, using story and parable is often proscribed in coach training – yet this is one of the most effective tools for helping someone to reflect and learn. It's also central to the concept of coaching in some cultures.

Mature coaches integrate coaching and mentoring, as the work of the Coach Maturity Research Group has demonstrated. The development of a coach's ethical competence is therefore highly correlated with their evolution as a human being. Again, the coach has to take responsibility for their own evolution and how they become an ethical practitioner.

Other critical issues for coaches and their influence on education include:

- The tension between how the coach likes to coach (or thinks they should coach) and how the client learns best. If coaching is intended to be client-centred, how ethical is it for the coach to decide what the client needs?
- Over-promising by coaches. What level of change can six sessions of coaching *really* bring about in a client – and how durable will it be?
- The needs of the client and those of their sponsors and stakeholders. Is it ethical to coach the client without consideration of the client ecosystem? What level of systemic competence do coaches therefore need to be safe to practice?

Coaching clients

Coaching clients include the person being coached, and sometimes a sponsor and/or buyer of coaching in an organisation. Coaching as it is often taught, is something a coach does to a client. It's rare for organisations buying coaching, or having an internal coach pool, to give any consideration to educating the client. The implied assumption here is that the client has little to offer in terms of the process. What are the implications of this?

There is almost no discussion in the coaching literature about client ethics. Yet the topic appears from time to time in supervision, when clients or sponsors exhibit unacceptable behaviour towards coaches.

If coaching is a learning partnership, then both parties need to be clear about mutual expectations and the ethical foundation of their conversations. So where is this embedded in the coaching competencies and coach education?

The wider social environment

What value is a coach adding to the world, if his or her practice is primarily about helping middle-career, narcissistic executives climb another rung up the corporate ladder? Where, for example, does sustainability (climate change, ecological responsibility etc) sit in the coach's ambitions for supporting their clients?

If coach education is focused primarily on skills and knowledge, rather than impact, it's inevitable that wider social issues get sidelined. At the very minimum, every coach should have an understanding of the psychology of ethicality and appropriate skills to help clients recognise and work through ethical dilemmas (Breakey, 2024; Smith, Hirsch Pontes, Magadlela & Clutterbuck, 2023). They also need to have *ecosystems awareness*. Where are the ethics in supporting an executive to advance their career in pursuit of goals that are harmful to the environment, or perpetuate inequality in the workplace? When a client company employs harmful personnel practices (for example, punitive 360-degree feedback processes), what is the coach's responsibility to challenge these?

In summary

The emphasis of coach education today, with regard to ethics, tends to be on making sure that students understand the relevant code of coaching ethics.

There is little attention to ethics in the greater complexity of the real world, where the codes often aren't a lot of help. Nor is there much attention to the ethics of being a training provider or professional body. For training individual coaches, we need to move to approaches that are primarily case-study based, so coaches can experience the complexity of working ethically, when there are multiple conflicts of interest. For training companies and professional bodies it is essential to question constantly: *Are we serving primarily our own needs or those of the world around us?*

© *David Clutterbuck 2024*

References

Breakey, H. (2024). Supply and Demand in the Development of Coaching Professional Ethics. *JOURNAL of COACHING ETHICS, 1*(3). https://doi.org/10.62882/yq996c26

Garvey, Dierolf, Clutterbuck (2024) What if everything we thought we knew about coach education were wrong?. *Organisations & People* (O&P) Vol29:1.

https://amed.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/OandP2024June.pdf

Rajasinghe D., Garvey, R., Smith, WA., Burt, S., Clutterbuck, D., Barosa-Pereira, A., & Csiga, Z., (2022). On becoming a coach: Narratives of Learning and Development. *The Coaching Psychologist;* 18(2). DOI https://doi.org/10.53841/bpstcp.2022.18.2.4

Smith, WA., Hirsch Pontes, E., Magadlela, D., & Clutterbuck, D. (Eds; 2023). *Ethical Case Studies for coach Development and Practice: A Coach's Companion:* Routledge. DOI https://doi.org/10.4324/b23351

Smith, WA, Boniwell, I. & Green, S. (Eds; 2021) *Positive Psychology Coaching in the Workplace:* Springer. DOI https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-79952-6

David Clutterbuck

E: david@clutterbuck-cmi.com
W: www.clutterbuck-cmi.com

David Clutterbuck is one of the early pioneers of developmental coaching and mentoring and co-founder of the European Mentoring & Coaching Council. Author of more than 70 books, including the first evidence-based titles on coaching culture and team coaching, he is visiting professor at four business schools. He leads a global network of specialist mentoring and coaching training consultants, Coaching and Mentoring International.

Ethical Codes

The Evolution of Ethics Codes and Why This Matters

Over time, change is inevitable. Shifting perspectives, revised beliefs and the integration of human innovation into our daily lives evoke further change — and so do Ethical Codes. The imperative for professionals is to cultivate an awareness of these changes — it serves as a checkpoint in their ethical maturity.

Kristin Kelly

"Whenever we look at the ways in which our perception of ethical business practice changes over time, we should note that such change is not necessarily good or bad but rather a function of human nature and of the ways in which our views are influenced by our environment, our culture, and the passage of time," Business Ethics Over Time (2024, p. 116).

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) considers it a best practice to regularly review its Code of Ethics (Code) to address contemporary issues facing coaches, ensure consistency, and refresh language where needed to align with the association as it is today. This review begins three years after the last version of the Code goes into effect.

While the essence of the ICF Code has largely remained the same since its adoption in 1998, there have been significant updates along the way as the coaching profession has grown, expanded and matured. The current version of the ICF Code of Ethics went into effect in January 2020—let that sink in.

It was published before Covid-19 was declared a global pandemic, before George Floyd was killed, and before Chat GPT was launched. The sheer amount of change and transition our world has seen in that short span of time—technologically, socially, and politically—has been significant. And while the world in which we live and work was changing, ICF was also shifting and stretching as an organization.

When 2023 rolled around, and it was time to begin work on the next Code review, the laundry list of items to explore was long. Artificial intelligence (AI), coaching platforms, diversity and inclusion...and how

coaching intersects with each of these topped the list. Also on the list were items not yet included in the Code, such as: team and group coaching, coaching minors, as well as coaching supervision. Beyond exploration into how these topics fit into the Code, it's crucial to forecast and consider how these topics may change over the next few years before the next Code review cycle begins.

Of course, Codes must remain flexible. It would be useless to write a detailed standard around artificial intelligence (AI) and coaching as it stands right now. The technology is changing too rapidly for anyone to have a tight grasp on it. Instead, adding something to a Code that speaks more broadly to technology and ethics would be better suited and more easily understood by coaches today and in the years to come.

Ethical Code revisions are inevitable—if Codes don't evolve, they become outdated, or worse, obsolete. Codes are the written response to current and emerging social challenges and it is in looking back through a Code's evolution that will show why it was necessary for revision in the first place (Metcalf, 2014).

When we look to the history and subsequent evolution of any ethical Code, we can see how far a profession has come. And we have a blueprint for where we are going. Take, for instance, the medical profession and its evolution around the principle of paternalism, the mindset where a doctor knows best. Not so long ago (in the 1960s), doctors would regularly withhold information from patients that could have helped them plan and live their lives (Evans, 2016). A 1963 national survey found that the majority of doctors at the time would not tell a patient they had cancer for fear of the emotional toll this news could have, citing ethical reasons (Evans, 2016). Thankfully, today, this practice is largely non-existent, with patients being empowered with knowledge.

So Why Does The Evolution Of Ethics Codes Matter To Coaches?

Change is inevitable, so coaches must retain a sense of awareness of the changes that are made, particularly for any Code(s) they are bound by. But truly, the next step for a coach, beyond awareness and understanding of an ethics Code, is the development of their ethical maturity over time, something that cannot be done through a Code.

Ethical maturity is defined as "the reflective, rational, emotional, and intuitive capacity to decide which actions are right and wrong, or good and better; the resilience and courage to implement those decisions; the willingness to be accountable for ethical decisions made (publicly or privately); and the ability to learn from and live with the experience," (Carroll & Shaw, 2013, p. 30). It must be stated that a Code cannot teach ethical maturity. In its most basic form, an association's Code of Ethics sets a standard for professional conduct or behavior. It exists to assist professionals in understanding how to conduct themselves and their businesses with integrity. The key word here is 'assist.'

> An ethics Code merely serves as a start point for professionals

A Code can provide guidance and direction but cannot give an exact answer or path to take. No Code could possibly address every scenario that every coach in every part of the world may face. The ethical dilemmas coaches face are much more complex and nuanced than anything a Code could directly point to (Vogel, 2018).

This is why it is important for coaches to augment their ethical thinking beyond the Code. This is the pathway to ethical maturity. It's ultimately about accountability for one's actions, and living with the repercussions of those choices and the learning gleaned throughout the process (Vogel, 2018).

So How Does One "Reach" Ethical Maturity?

Simply put, ethical maturity comes through experience and dialogue (Smith & Clutterbuck 2023; Vogel, 2018). There are so many ways to do this—one step is finding a way to discuss coaching ethics with peers. The Coaching Ethics Forum (CEF; www.coachingethicsforum.com) is helping coaches worldwide do this at a large scale and with significant impact (i.e., through virtual conferences, webinars, publications, etc.). Beyond CEF, individual coaching organizations and coach training bodies are other avenues to explore for this sort of connection.

For example, at ICF, there are monthly Water Cooler Conversations open to all coaches to raise and explore ethical concerns and questions. There are also Ethics Community of Practice sessions that explore emerging trends, tools, and best practices through quarterly webinars from subject matter experts or facilitated discussions.

Further, the pathway to ethical maturity is paved with other such actions as reflection, case formulation, supervision, and reviewing case studies: a great resource is the edited book: Ethical Case Studies for Coach Development and Practice (Smith, Pontes, Magadlela, & Clutterbuck, 2024. Coaches can participate in these activities to learn and grow (Smith & Clutterbuck, 2024). Each of these will help strengthen the ethical muscle in time. No matter what modality a coach explores for professional development, the point is to take the next step—to look beyond the ethics Code and continue to learn, grow and stretch that ethical muscle.

Ethics, in any profession, are never complete—they can't be. As people, expectations, and behaviors change, ethics Codes will continue to be reviewed and revised over time. As Codes evolve, it is a coach's obligation to be aware of these changes but, even more than that, to bravely step forward on their path toward ethical maturity.

References

Business Ethics Over Time (2024). LibreTexts. (p. https://biz.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Business/Business_Ethics/Business_Ethics_(OpenStax)/05%3A_The_Impact_of_Culture_and_Time_on_Business_Ethics/5.03%3A_Business_Ethics_over_Time

Carroll, M. & Shaw, E. (2013). *Ethical Maturity in the Helping Professions* (p 30). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Evans, J.. (2016). Medical Ethics: The Changing Ethics of Health Care. Caring for the Ages (July 2016 issue, p 12). https://www.caringfortheages.com/article/S1526-4114(16)30143-3/pdf

International Coaching Federation (2024). *ICF Code of Ethics.* https://coachingfederation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics

Metcalf, Jacob (2014). *Ethics Codes: History, Context, and Challenges. Council for Big Data, Ethics, and Society.* https://bdes.datasociety.net/council-output/ethics-codes-history-context-and-challenges/

Smith, WA., & Clutterbuck. D. (2023). Ethics case studies for coach education and development. In WA. Smith, E. Hirsch Pontes, D. Magadlela, & D. Clutterbuck, (Eds.). *Ethical Case Studies for coach Development and Practice: A Coach's Companion:* Routledge

Smith, W-A., Pontes Hirsch, E., Magadlela, D., & Clutterbuck, D. (2024). Ethical Case Studies for Coach Development and Practice (p. 3-10). Routledge.

Vogel, M. (2018). *Beyond codes of ethics to ethical maturity* (December 2018). Vogel Wakefield. https://vogelwakefield.com/2018/12/beyond-codes-of-ethics-to-ethical-maturity/

Kristin Kelly

E: Kristin.Kelly@coachingfederation.org
W: https://www.linkedin.com/in/kristinmarie/

Kristin Kelly has served the International Coaching Federation (ICF) since 2007 in numerous capacities (including marketing, membership, and leadership development) before her current position as the Director of Ethics, Compliance and Culture. In her role, she serves as liaison to the ICF's Independent Review Board (IRB), Ethics Advocacy Team, and Code Review Team; she oversees brand compliance across the ICF Ecosystem; and works with stakeholders across the ICF around ethics, policy and compliance initiatives. In addition, she spearheads various cultural initiatives for ICF Staff and oversees ICF's New Employee Onboarding Program.

Champion Ethical Excellence, Shape the Future

COACHING
ETHICS
FORUM

Advancing Ethics in Coaching, Mentoring, & Leadership

www.coachingethicsforum.com

Conversations With Change-Makers

Conversations with Change-Makers - where we get to know the people behind today's wisdom and crafting tomorrow's vision.

Ethics as a Path to Collective Awakening: A Vision with Wendy-Ann Smith

~ Interviewed by Arne-Per Heurberg

For the complete conversation with Wendy-Ann Smith, click here to watch the full recording

About Wendy-Ann Smith

Wendy-Ann, a coaching psychologist, is the founder of the Coaching Ethics Forum, the Journal of Coaching Ethics, and Ethical Edge Insights. Wendy-Ann's work is at the intersection of coaching psychology, positive psychology, and ethics. Recognised as one of the top 15 coaches in Paris, she continues to contribute to the growth and integrity of the coaching field through her thought leadership and initiatives.

Q: What inspired you to pursue your current professional path in coaching ethics?

A: It began with what I call getting "bit" - in a good way. As a registered psychologist across multiple countries who identifies as a coaching psychologist and who gave some of the first lectures on positive psychology in coaching, in hindsight, it was inevitable; I guess that my first book project would be to lead a co-edited book on the topics. I hold the book *'Positive Psychology Coaching in the Workplace'* dear and affectionately refer to it as my "baby." While working on that book, I understood ethics needed deeper attention than what we could cover there. The tension from this understanding is what led me to create the Coaching Ethics Forum, the *Journal of Coaching Ethics*, and most recently, *ETHICAL EDGE Insights* magazine.

Q: How has your work impacted the profession?

A: The impact has been remarkable and humbling. After our first Coaching Ethics Forum conference, we learned that academic institutions across Europe had revamped their postgraduate coaching programs based on our work. The conference's success, with its high attendance and quality content, showed a real hunger for ethical discourse in coaching. This influence continues to grow as more institutions redesign their programs using our framework.

Q: What role does ethics play in your decision-making process? Can you share an example?

A: Ethics isn't just about following a code - it's about developing what I call an "ethical antenna" and embodying an ethical way of being. A challenging example involves status and power dynamics in coaching, which is an incredibly competitive profession. When you're dealing with status, perceived power, and having to hold people to account, it can be a daunting and sometimes precarious path to walk. I've walked through some coals over the last four or five years, but I'm stronger and more confident as a consequence. I know it is due to being grounded in my sense of ethics and understanding it is what keeps me strong – empowered - to hold my ground and walk forward no matter what I'm facing.

Q: If you could shape the long-term effect of your work, what would the influence be?

A: I envision a broad influence extending beyond coaching to impact all professions. The goal is to make ethical thinking and behaviour as natural as breathing. It's not just that ethics matters - it is the underlying factor of everything we do at every given time. Think of it like the well-being movement that has been around for decades but had a significant uptick of momentum during COVID-19; we need a similar awakening about ethics.

Q: How can readers contribute to realising this vision?

A: Join the conversation! Join us at the Coaching Ethics Forum. Read and contribute to the Journal of Coaching Ethics and ETHICAL EDGE Insights. For those less interested in academic work, share your practical experiences through the magazine. Everyone's experience contributes to what I call a "circular outcome, input outcome for everyone." We're creating a collaborative learning environment where everyone's voice matters.

Q: What do you believe is the most pressing issue in your field today?

A: The sheer number of coaches - both accredited and not - need to engage with ethical development. The competitive nature of the coaching profession can sometimes lead to compromised ethical standards. We need to shift from viewing ethics as merely a compliance requirement to recognising it as a pathway to enhanced confidence, self-esteem, and overall well-being. Just as well-being gained widespread recognition after COVID, ethics is poised for a similar awakening. It's not that hard - we just need to engage, educate, and build community around ethical practice.

Q: What moments make you pause, almost in disbelief, that you actually get to do this?

A: After our first conference, I was absolutely exhausted and took a few days off. My friend Dumi asked me, "Do you know what you did?" I was still too deep in the doing of it all to fully comprehend just what we had put together. He said, "You just pulled together from the ground-up a high-quality international conference of a calibre, type and tone that was unique for the space." I had to really wrestle with that for a while before I could say, "Hell, yes, I did, didn't I?" and give myself permission to own the success—and due acknowledgement.

Two other things make me pause in amazement. First, seeing people proudly promoting their participation in ethics webinars - they're doing it with genuine pride, which shows how the field is evolving. Second, the incredible people I get to work with. These are professionals I've looked up to my whole career, and they're happy to speak at our conference and participate in this work. It's really cool that they appreciate the topic enough to contribute their time and thinking. That still amazes me.

Arne-Per Heurberg

E: apheurberg@apdot.com
LI: https://www.freelancer.com/users/l.
php?url=https:%2F%2Fwww.linkedin.

Arne-Per Heurberg, known as "Per," is a seasoned generalist with over two decades of experience in coaching, consulting, and advising. Founder of The Coaches Coalition and APDOT LLC, which includes the health and wellness division Resilience Rogue, he leverages his multidisciplinary background in Physics and Philosophy from UCLA to foster growth and drive impactful change through values-based approaches and ethical decision-making.

Vanguard's Insights

The Heart of Systemic Ethics

To be ethical is to be in service of all the nested systems of which you are one small part, rather than to be seeking to sub-optimise local benefit. The article draws on my forthcoming book "Beauty in Leadership and Coaching and its role in transforming human consciousness."

Peter Hawkins

The word "ethics" is derived from the Greek word ethos (character). In its Greek origins ethics was always contextual and collective. Ethics is a system of moral beliefs and principles that are used to guide behaviour. They can be explicit or implicit, written down or part of the culture, conscious or unconscious. There can be a difference between our conscious espoused ethics and the ethics we enact.

Aristotle, considered by many as the founder of European Ethics, coined the term *'zoon politikon'*, meaning that humans are political and social beings, and that human ethics can only be understood collectively and contextually, that is within the context of the 'polis' – the social mores and political structures of which they are a part.

Aristotle had a systemic view of Ethics, understanding how the 'individual', is nested within the 'household' which is in turn nested within the 'city-state' or 'polis.' Aristotle (1944 vol 21 1253, p.1-29) writes: *"Thus also the city-state is prior in nature to the household and to each of us individually. For the whole must necessarily be prior to the part; since when the whole body is destroyed, foot or hand will not exist."*

Aristotle saw virtue as coming from a natural impulse to form partnerships and work collaboratively, but *"when devoid of virtue man is the most unholy and savage of animals."* (Aristotle 1944 vol 2, p.29-30).

In Europe in the late seventh and eighteenth century the 'Age of Reason' brought with it a philosophy of trying to create universal truths. Kant argued that to lie was always wrong; so, even if someone was hiding in your house, and soldiers came searching for them to murder them, you should not lie to save their life. Rationality, empirical science and the left-hemisphere neo-cortex, love certainty, fixed rules,

commandments and absolutes. This can also be said about the Pharisees and Sadducees at the time of Jesus. They wanted to know whether or not Jesus believed in the laws of the prophets and the commandments of God, as delivered by Moses.

Jesus said that we need to live under the laws of our context and give unto Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Mark 12:17) – that is, live in accord with your context. Jesus's commandments were not rules, but rather guiding principles. The Age of Reason gave birth to modernism in Western Europe and then in North America, and ethics became decontextualised. Ethical philosophers began to see ethics dualistically and individualised, with their ethics being based on delineating 'right and wrong' behaviour of an individual. This approach has fundamentally influenced codes of ethics of most professions in the 20th and 21st centuries, including coaching.

Bateson's Epistemological Errors

I have long argued that the urgent challenges of our time require an equally urgent transformation of human consciousness (Hawkins, 2024; Whybrow et al., 2022) and that a key part of this is for us to return to eco-systemic ethics. I have argued that whereas coaching has made a great contribution to moving the focus of leadership from I.Q. to EQ (emotional intelligence) and SQ (social and relational intelligence), there is now an important need to move from IQ (Individualised intelligence) to We. Q. (Collaborative and collective intelligence) (Hawkins & Turner, 2020; Hawkins, 2021)).

> The great challenges of our times can only be addressed through partnerships and collective responses.

It is fifty years since Gregory Bateson, wrote about how our epistemological errors would destroy the ecology and our species, unless we learnt to perceive, understand and engage with the wider world around us in new ways (Bateson, 1972). In that time our species has become increasingly more destructive of the wider ecology, rather than less, and the three dangerous epistemological frameworks of atomism, individualism and dualism, have become more entrenched.

Following Bateson, I have long argued that we need not only a new epistemology, but a new Systemic

Ethics (Hawkins, 1991: 2004: 2021: 2024.) Our Ethics are rooted in our epistemological ways of perceiving and understanding the world. Some of the dangerous epistemological beliefs that have dominated Western modernist thinking include:

1. Economic growth should be pursued in all circumstances.
2. Evolutionary survival and success are both built on competition.
3. The 'more-than-human' world of the wider ecology are resources for humans to exploit without cost or consequences.
4. Individuals are primary and they create families, communities, and organizations without recognizing that organizations, culture, communities, and families create individuals.
5. That the world is made up of separate things.

Bateson pointed out that we had misunderstood Darwin and the nature of evolution. The unit of survival was never the individual, team, organization, community, nation or species, for: "The unit of survival is organism plus environment." He goes on to say: "We are learning from bitter experience that the organism that destroys its environment destroys itself." (see Hawkins, 2021, p.420).

New Systemic Ethics

We can now build on this Batesonian epistemological turn, with a realisation that to survive and flourish you need to be in service of the flourishing of all the wider systems you are nested within. Thus, for any organism, individual or collective, to attempt to 'sub-optimize' their local benefit and 'win out' against a wider system they are nested within, is not only destructive and unethical, but ultimately self-destructive.

Sub-optimization can be defined as attempting to optimize the benefits for one part of a system in a way that does not serve the wider systemic levels they are part of, and which may indeed be at the cost of the greater whole.

If an individual tries to be the star player, in a way that is costly for the team, both will lose out. If the team in an organization tries to be 'the best team on the block' by ensuring they have more than their share of resources, positioning and limelight, the wider organization, and eventually the team, will suffer (Hawkins, 2021B).

If an organization focuses on the short-term maximisation of profit, by paying their staff and

suppliers at the lowest rate possible and charging their customers at the highest price possible, paying the least tax and contribution to the wider society and exploiting the wider ecology, eventually all their stakeholder relationships will degrade. People will not do business with them, and they will eventually fail. A 'win-lose' mentality eventually creates a 'lose-lose' outcome.

Through studying history, we can see that if a country tries to dominate the human world, and their success is built on exploitation and colonisation of other countries, then likewise this sub-optimization of one part of the species, will not only cost those exploited but eventually the exploiters. The same is true at the species level. Any species that flourishes at an increasing cost to the ecological niches it occupies, will degrade the natural ecological context they are dependent upon for flourishing.

We therefore urgently need a new systemic ethic, centred on being in service of all the wider systems we each of us are part of, and that are also part of us. The family, organizational culture, community and the ecology are not just something that surrounds us, for they all live in, and through us, in every breath we breath and every mouthful of food and drink we ingest. This is the systemic principle of 'Two-way nesting' – that the parts are nested within the whole, but also the whole lives in and through the parts and their inter-relating.

An organization cannot live and flourish without its different functions, teams, employees, within it also flourishing. It can also only flourish if its relationships and partnerships with its wider stakeholders and eco-system are co-creating value for all parties.

Systemic ethics needs to be focussed, 'outside-in' and 'future-back'. This means not asking what do I and we need now, in order to win, be successful, rich and happy? But rather we need to constantly ask:

'What can I, and we, best contribute to all the wider systems, that I, and we, are part of?"

And:

"What do these wider systems need in order to flourish into the future?"

> ## We Need An Ethic Of Systemic Service, Not An Ethic Of Sub-Optimized Local Short-Term Benefit.

Implications for Coaching

Executive coaching in its early formative years was greatly influenced by sports coaching (Galwey 1974; Whitmore,1992) and this has led to many individual and team coaches focusing on their coachee or team, winning and being the best and most successful they can be. This can lead to focusing on individual and local success at the cost of the wider systems and different forms of sub-optimisation.

Systemic coaching (Hawkins & Turner, 2020) and Systemic Team Coaching (Hawkins, 2021; 2022), Systemic Supervision (Hawkins, 2011), and eco-systemic coaching (Whybrow, et al. 2022) all have a different focus. They see the coachee, supervisee or team, not as a client but as a coaching partner, where together they focus on how the team or coachee can increase the beneficial value they co-create with, and for, all their stakeholders and the nested systems of which they are a part.

The ethical focus is on moving beyond ego-centric wants of the coachee or team, to a wider eco-centric focus, through opening up and widening, the circles of care and concern and ensuring the coaching includes engaging with the widest possible range of stakeholder needs including those of the more-than-human world.

References

Aristotle (1944) *Aristotle in 23 Volumes* Translated by H. Rackman. Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press William Heinemann

Bateson, G. (1972). *Steps to an ecology of mind.* New York: Ballantine Books.

Bateson, G. (1975) *What is Epistemology?* Tape of a talk given at the Esalen Institute, Big Sur, CA, U.S.A, 1975.

Bateson, G. (1979). *Mind and nature: A necessary unity.* New York: Dutton.

Bateson, G. (1991). *A sacred unity: further steps to an ecology of mind.* New York: Harper Collins.

Gallwey, W. Timothy (1974). *The Inner Game of Tennis* (1st ed.). New York: Random House.

Hawkins, P (1991) The Spiritual Dimension of the Learning Organisation, *Management Education and Development,* 22 (3) pp 172–87

Hawkins, P. (2004). A centennial tribute to Gregory Bateson 1904-1980 and his influence on the fields of organizational development and action research. *Action Research,* 2(4): 409–423.

Hawkins, P. (2011b). Expanding emotional, ethical and cognitive capacity in supervision. In Passmore, J. *Supervision in coaching.* London: Kogan Page.

Hawkins, P. (2021). *Leadership team coaching: Developing collective transformational leadership* (4th ed.). London: Kogan Page.

Hawkins, P (2021B) *Beyond the High-Performing Team.* www.renewalassociates.co.uk/Blogs

Hawkins, P. (2024) *Beauty in Leadership and Coaching: and the transformation of Human Consciousness.* London: Routledge

Hawkins, P., & Carr, C. (2023). Ethics in team coaching. In Wendy-Ann Smith, Jonathan Passmore, Eve Turner, Yi-Ling Lai and David Clutterbuck (Ed.), *The Ethical Coaches' Handbook.* Routledge Member of the Taylor and Francis Group.

Hawkins, P., & Smith, N. (2013). *Coaching, mentoring and organizational consultancy: Supervision, skills and development* (2nd ed.). Open University Press

Hawkins, P. &Turner, E. (2020) *Systemic Coaching: Delivering Values Beyond the Individual.* London: Routledge.

Whitmore, J. (1992). *Coaching for Performance: A Practical Guide to Growing Your Own Skills.* London: Nicholas Brealey.

Whybrow, A., Turner, E., McClean, J. and Hawkins, P. (2023). *Ecological and Climate-Conscious Coaching: A Companion Guide to Evolving Coaching Practice.* London: Routledge.

Peter Hawkins

E: peter.hawkins@renewalassociates.co.uk
W: www.renewalassociates.co.uk
LI: https://www.linkedin.com/in/professorpeterhawkins/

Peter Hawkins is Chairman of Renewal Associates, Emeritus Professor of Leadership at Henley Business School and a global thought leader and author in Leadership and Systemic Coaching and Systemic Team Coaching. He consults to organizations and leads training in Systemic Team Coaching throughout the world.

" The really tough choices... don't center upon right versus wrong. They involve right versus right. They are genuine dilemmas precisely because each side is firmly rooted in one of our basic, core values."

Rushworth Kidder

:HUDSON

Hudson Institute of Coaching
Pioneers in the field since 1986

COACHING
ETHICS
FORUM

Advancing Ethics in Coaching, Mentoring, & Leadership

www.coachingethicsforum.com

Global Perspectives

Ubuntu Intelligence in Ethical Coaching Practice

Ubuntu embodies collective accountability for the greater good, with Ubuntu intelligence transcending superficial differences, enabling deep human connection and engagement. Ubuntu is a universal form of intelligence enables greater human connection and genuine engagement across superficial and/or learned differences.

Dumisani Magadlela PhD

Unpacking Fundamentals of Ubuntu Wisdom as Ethical Grounding for Coaches

Ubuntu means that I hold myself and others to the highest ethical standards of collective grounding and shared values that serve the greater good. It is not about selfish sectional or self-service that has riddled whole nations and practically the whole planet's resources as has been experienced for centuries. Ubuntu evokes our highest sensibilities and holds us to account for every action towards the greater good and service of the whole. It is the original ethical blueprint for humanity.

Ubuntu is an inherent quality that lives within all humans. Healthy humans can access their Ubuntu qualities anytime if they so wish.

The essence and core principles underlying Ubuntu are what makes us caring beings who seek to connect. Ubuntu enables us all to co-create and nurture shared spaces where every fellow human can express their natural gifts, talents and abilities unencumbered by limiting prejudice, conditioned behaviours, and obstructive stereotypes.

Professional coaches who ascribe to the values of igniting human excellence understand that coaching from an Ubuntu stance opens up greater opportunities for clients to feel safe to explore new territories across their awareness landscape.

Ubuntu Intelligence means that when I disrespect and dehumanise you and your humaneness, I am by extension doing it to myself, as we are inherently and inextricably interconnected. While Ubuntu is systemic in perspective, it goes beyond the intellectual narrative of systems thinking as expressed through identified connections. Ubuntu has a powerful spiritual, emotional and intuitive 'knowing' when one is experiencing it. It carries within it elements of attunement imbued with connective energy that

ignites genuine interest in and connects with others. As of November 2022, we have over eight billion gifts of humanity to serve to co-create our shared space – Earth – where everyone can thrive using their unique inherent gifts.

Critics of Ubuntu often portray it as a purely Africa-based approach to living a communal life in contexts where value is drawn from collaboration and co-operation with others. There are merits to this argument. However, it is a limited grasp of the full scope, breadth, value and impact of Ubuntu in its full expression. Ubuntu is not an obscure way of dealing with different communities' acceptance of others and everything they bring with them.

> Ubuntu is a universally occurring quality of humaneness.

One of the greatest modern philosophers and thinkers on the wisdom of community, healing, and using traditional rituals to open up engagement channels that enable Ubuntu is Dr Malidoma Some from the Dagara people of Burkina Faso. In his groundbreaking book '*The Healing Wisdom of Africa'* (1999),Dr Some implores us to understand what we are here on earth for. He says:

> "*We do not come to this world on vacation. We come here for service, and we have to remember what this service is. The nature of our service – our purpose – was configured already in the spirit world before we came here. Community is the mirror that allows us to see our purpose, the school where we first learn the meaning of service"* (Malidoma Patrice Some, 1999: pp. 312-313).

Re-Introducing Ubuntu Intelligence (UbuQ)

Ubuntu Intelligence is about living with the humane awareness that everything is inherently interconnected. It is the awareness that our need to connect and support each other across geographies, social, religious, economic, racial, cultural, gender, and multiple other constructs is an integral part of who we are as humans. Ubuntu Intelligence is the recognition that what separates and fragments humanity into disparate and unrecognisable small parts is superficial and human-made for one reason or another.

Ubuntu Intelligence involves supporting others in their search for greater, deeper, and more meaningful connection through whatever platform, space, and

chosen vocation they are in. Ubuntu Intelligence helps us to be more of ourselves in service of our greater good, our communities, and our organisation. It is the most naturally ethical quality, and value, to live by with fellow human beings.

The magical value and power of Ubuntu intelligence is in how it naturally ignites our 'ethical bone' (holds an internal mirror for us) within our consciousness and implores us – while holding us accountable to our humane values – to be ever more accountable to the greater good.

In the context of fast-paced change and as an indirect expansive expression of Ubuntu Intelligence, Ken Wilber, Terry Patten, Adam Leornard and Marco Morelli, in their seminal book '*Integral Life Practice'*, (2008), share the broad-spectrum usage and application of Integral Life Practice (ILP) as it relates to just about anything and everything in human life. They describe Integral Life Practice (ILP) as "*working synergistically on body, mind and spirit in self, culture, and nature"* (Wilber et al, 2008, p.12).

I must state here that Ubuntu Intelligence is not a new awakening of sorts. Rather, it is a returning home to available – if ancient – wisdom that helps us find and see each other as fellow beings. Wilber *et al* (2008) contend that Integral Life Practice (ILP) is not about rejecting any particular form of awakening in favour of the next new fad.

Integration, and similar qualities are needed in the world today, as Reuel J. Khoza, a leading Ubuntu thinker and advocate, says that with its integrating qualities, Ubuntu may just be the one instrument the world needs. Especially relevant with the fast-paced, tech-driven, changes across the business landscape globally. Khoza argues thus:

> "Much western business and leadership theory has converged on relational thinking and ethics but still lack an integrating idea. Ubuntu can provide that. African humanism (Ubuntu) can be regarded as a uniting concept [and way of being] that pulls together many threads of contemporary leadership and governance theory [and practice]" (Khoza, 2011: p. 24, my emphasis).

While I agree with his argument, I suggest extending it to include Ubuntu Intelligence as the lifeblood of ethical human relationships. It is with the full integration of Ubuntu Intelligence as the normalised 'way of being', that enables relationships to flourish ethically, and for all human beings to become the best versions of themselves.

Ubuntu Wisdom and Ethics in a Fast-Changing Environment

Ubuntu is not just about pronouncing on, or preaching about, these humane qualities and values we all have. It is about living them – or living with them - daily and ethically as the norm. The technological revolution has its challenges, with some questioning the lack of humanity in its use. I do believe, however, that the technological revolution, as can be seen in technologically enhanced coaching platforms, has major advantages that can enhance genuine connection when used with Ubuntu awareness.

Conscious Greetings

Greeting others consciously and mindfully is an integral element of Ubuntu Intelligence. Consciously greeting others helps to establish rapport with coaching and other clients. It is the leading ethical start to any relationship. Genuine connection helps cut through the red tape often found across all forms and levels of difference, real or assumed.

When we are grounded in ethical values of genuine care of the other, we greet intentionally, mindfully, and consciously. When we connect this way, we are saying I accept and embrace the unique gifts only you can bring into this world right here and right now (Lane, Magadlela, et al., 2023). We are inviting others to connect authentically in the now. It is a gift to the new relationship and can lead anywhere the two (or more) choose to take it. Within organisations, conscious greetings during employee onboarding or in team coaching sessions generally help to create psychological safety where fellow employees feel empowered and safe to share their views without fear of negative retribution or career-threatening consequences.

Ubuntu Intelligence (UbuQ) is who we are when we are at our most connected and when we see others as they see and regard themselves.

To conclude, indigenous wisdom, such as Ubuntu, grounded in native African Wisdom, provides a depth and acceptance of diversity in its fullest expression through Ubuntu Intelligence and provides an anchor of ethical conduct for professionals, coaches, mentors, and leaders..

References

Reuel J. Khoza, (2011) Attuned Leadership. African Humanism as Compass. Cape Town. Penguin Books South Africa (Pty) Ltd.

Lane, D. A., Magadlela, D., Yong Wei Kit, I. & Spiegel, S (2023) Ethics and culture in coaching – moving beyond a universal Western ethical code. In WA. Smith, J., Passmore,

E., Turner, Yi-Ling., Lai, & D. Clutterbuck, (Eds.). *The Ethical Coaches' Handbook: A Guide to Developing Ethical Maturity in Practice:* Routledge (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003277729

Dumisani Magadlela

E: Dumi@netactive.co.za
W: www.Afrikacoaching.com

Dr. Dumi Magadlela is an executive and team coach, keynote speaker, Ubuntu coach, and leadership development trainer. Credentialed as a PCC by the ICF and a Senior Practitioner by the EMCC, he is a certified Gestalt practitioner. Dumi is an author on leadership transformation, coaching, and ethics. He is a global leader in coaching development. Dumi served as the Chairperson of the ICF Global Board of Directors from 2023 to 2024. Based in Johannesburg, South Africa, he works globally both virtually and in person.

JoCE

JOURNAL of COACHING ETHICS

www.journalofcoachingethics.com

Peer Reviewed Open Access Journal

Exclusive Feature

The Imperative for Coaching Standards:
Upholding Integrity and Excellence

A collective effort by all coaching bodies is paramount to curb the tide of unprofessional coaching practices and establish coaching on a secure footing grounded in fundamental, agreed-upon standards. Without regulation, its legitimacy is called into question at every turn.

Naysan Firoozmand & Wendy-Ann Smith

The Need for Universally Accepted Coaching Standards

Coaching, a supportive practice rooted in fostering individual and collective development, stands at the brink of substantial growth with the advent of AI and the multiple education domains both academic and public. The absence of universally accepted standards and regulations is a growing concern that threatens the very fabric of our profession. As staunch advocates for the integrity and quality of coaching, we have dedicated significant effort to address this issue. The absence undermines coaching's potential to effect transformative change in individuals, teams, organisations, and human consciousness.

The current landscape of coaching is as diverse as it is unregulated. Thousands of self-proclaimed coaches offer their services, many without any formal qualifications or adherence to a codified set of ethical guidelines. This lack of regulation not only dilutes the quality of coaching available but also poses a significant risk to those seeking guidance, potentially leading to unsatisfactory outcomes and even harm.

The need for a foundational standard in coaching practices cannot be overstated. It is not merely a matter of credentialing but of establishing a benchmark that ensures every coaching engagement is underpinned by a commitment to professionalism, confidentiality, and a client-centred approach. We have long championed this cause, recognising that the path to legitimising coaching as a profession is through the implementation of rigorous standards.

Dysregulation: Reputation of Coaching

The realm of coaching is filled with instances of

unregulated practices that can be detrimental to the profession's reputation. Unqualified individuals can exploit clients' vulnerability, leading to a tarnished reputation for the coaching community. Clients may not have the means to validate the coach's expertise and, more importantly, the wellbeing of the coach's clients, a fundamental principle of ethics of care in coaching (Smith & Arnold, 2023; Smith & Clutterbuck, 2023). For example, there are coaches who offer "instant" solutions, promising dramatic life changes with minimal effort or engagement. These quick-fix approaches often lack the depth and rigour of accredited coaching methods.

Another concerning practice is the absence of confidentiality agreements; some coaches do not understand nor adhere to strict privacy standards, which can result in the misuse of sensitive client information. This breaches trust and exposes clients to potential exploitation..

Training Programs and Continuous Self-Development

The core of our advocacy is the promotion of accredited training programs that equip coaches with the necessary skills, knowledge, and ethical competence to serve their clients effectively. Accreditation serves as a seal of quality, assuring clients that a coach has undergone a comprehensive evaluation of their competencies and understanding of ethics. It is a safeguard that protects the interests of both coaches and clients, ensuring that the coaching relationship is built on a foundation of mutual respect and professional integrity - and the field of coaching.

Moreover, we emphasise the critical importance of continuous professional development in related fields that contribute to the skill, knowledge and capability of the coach. This is in addition to having regular coaching supervision from a qualified and accredited coach supervisor. The field of coaching is dynamic, with new theories and methodologies emerging regularly. It is incumbent upon coaches to remain at the forefront of these developments, refining their skills and expanding their knowledge base to provide the highest level of service. This ongoing learning process is not just a professional requirement but a necessity for maintaining the quality and relevance of coaching services. Experienced coaches have demonstrated their commitment to ongoing reflection and development, constantly evolving their practice (Rajasinghe, Garvey, Smith, et al., 2022).

> Continuous professional development should be the basis for all professional coaching practice.

Our Efforts Towards Standardisation

To this end, we have initiated dialogues with representatives from the world's leading coaching accreditation organisations. Our objective is clear: to forge a consensus on the essential standards that define competent and ethical coaching. These discussions are critical in shaping a future where coaching is not just seen as a supportive tool but as a professional service characterised by excellence and trustworthiness. These organisations play a pivotal role in ensuring that coaching practitioners adhere to high standards of competence, ethics, and professionalism.

These bodies provide independent certification and create a global network of credentialed coaches. Independently all of these organisations add incredible value to the coaching profession, providing opportunities for learning, establishing credibility, advocate for the profession and elevate coaching standards through continuous improvement. However, their collective impact transcends what they could achieve independently. Together they can advocate for coaching's recognition and relevance; they can influence policymakers, organisations, and the public to appreciate coaching's value and integrate it into various contexts.

They can collectively address gaps, validate coaching methodologies, and contribute to evidence-based practices; coaches often seek multiple credentials, collaboration enables streamlined processes for cross-credentialing (this benefits coaches' professional growth and simplifies the credentialing journey); and coaches benefit from collective wisdom.

Can there be a universally accepted standard?

Our endeavour to establish global standards in coaching is a challenging one. Global standards grounded in evidence-based practice are the requirements for a service industry to become a profession (Grant & Cavanagh, 2004; Kauffman, 2005) and regulation with a coherent cross-cultural ethical standard (Smith & Arnold, 2023). A significant hurdle is the diversity of legal and cultural contexts in which coaching operates. What is considered ethical and professional in one country may not align with

the norms of another, making it difficult to create a one-size-fits-all standard. Also, at the same time, it allows for flexibility and personalisation in coaching approaches, but it also makes it challenging to enforce a standardised approach. One approach to resolving this could be to adopt international standards with local adaptations to respect local cultural norms and practices. Cultural competence training within coaching training, could ensure coaching methods are effective and respectful among different cultures. What does seem evident is that engaging coaches and organisations from diverse backgrounds in the development of a common foundation can ensure that these standards are inclusive and considerate of various cultural perspectives.

In contrast, how do you define global standard approach, while allowing for flexibility and personalisation in coaching approaches? Coaches who are accustomed to operating independently may resist the imposition of regulations that they perceive as restrictive or bureaucratic. We also fully recognise the financial implications of standardisation.

Accreditation, continuous professional development and having a qualified coach supervisor require investment of time and money. Not all coaches may be willing or able to incur these costs. This economic barrier can limit the reach of standardised practices, especially in regions where coaching is still an emerging profession. However, working collaboratively across all regions around best practices in coaching can elevate the profession's reputation locally (and globally), paving the way for new innovations and opportunities for aspiring coaches wishing to be part of a universally accepted standard and a profession that is respected.

Consensus Building: Safeguarding the Reputation of Coaching

Understandably, consensus-building among the various accreditation bodies is complex. Each organisation has its own criteria and values, and finding common ground requires a process of dialogue, openness, challenge, trust, negotiation and compromise. The risk of diluting standards to achieve agreement is a concern that must be navigated with care, taking into consideration the sometimes-strong perspectives from long-established institutions and remaining open to co-create a collective way forward that is new and different to what has already existed.

> The biggest challenge we face is being able to remain open enough to the possibility that a different way of working is possible.

Despite the challenges, the pursuit of regulated coaching standards is necessary. Only through collective effort and a shared commitment to excellence can we overcome these obstacles together and establish coaching as a respected and trusted profession for all.

References

Grant, A. M. & Cavanagh, M. J. (2004). Toward a profession of coaching: sixty-five years of progress and challenges for the future. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring,* 2(1): 1–16.

Kauffman, C. (2005) *De-mystifying research: an introduction for coaches.* In I. F. Stein, F. Campone, & I. J. Page (Eds), Proceedings of the Second ICF Coaching Research Symposium (pp. 161–168). Washington, DC: International Coach Federation.

Rajasinghe D., Garvey, R., Smith, WA., Burt, S., Clutterbuck, D., Barosa-Pereira, A., & Csiga, Z., (2022). On becoming a coach: Narratives of Learning and Development.*The Coaching Psychologist;* 18(2). DOI https://doi.org/10.53841/bpstcp.2022.18.2.4

Smith, WA., & Clutterbuck. D. (2023). Ethics case studies for coach education and development. In WA. Smith, E. Hirsch Pontes, D. Magadlela, & D. Clutterbuck, (Eds.). *Ethical Case Studies for coach Development and Practice: A Coach's Companion:* Routledge

Smith, WA., & Arnold, C., (2023). Ethical coaching and its relationships. In WA. Smith, J., Passmore, E., Turner, Yi-Ling., Lai, & D. Clutterbuck, (Eds.). *The Ethical Coaches' Handbook: A Guide to Developing Ethical Maturity in Practice:* Routledge

Naysan Firoozmand

E: naysan@renewalassociates.co.uk
W: www.renewalassociates.co.uk
W: www.systemicteamcoaching.com
LI: https://www.linkedin.com/in/naysan/

Naysan Firoozmand is the Head of Consulting and Global COO at Renewal Associates working with Professor Peter Hawkins. With a background in occupational psychology, he leverages his extensive experience to help leaders and teams enhance their performance and resilience. Naysan's approach combines practical techniques with deep psychological insights, enabling clients to develop new skills and confidence. He has played a pivotal role in executive education, notably at Ashridge Hult Business School, and is now contributing to the evolution of systemic team coaching at Renewal Associates.

Wendy-Ann Smith

E: wendy-ann@eclorev.eu
W: www.eclorev.eu
W:www.coachingethicsforum.com
W:www.journalofcoachingethics.com
LI:https://www.linkedin.com/in/wendy-ann-smith/

Wendy-Ann Smith, a coaching psychologist, is the founder of the Coaching Ethics Forum, the Journal of Coaching Ethics, and Ethical Edge Insights. Her work lies at the intersection of coaching psychology, positive psychology, and ethics. Recognised as one of Paris's top 15 coaches, Wendy-Ann's research explores how coaches develop ethical maturity, resilience, and wellbeing. She advances ethicality and wellbeing through one-to-one coaching, workshops, and thought leadership, contributing to the growth of the coaching field with impactful initiatives and a dedication to professional excellence.
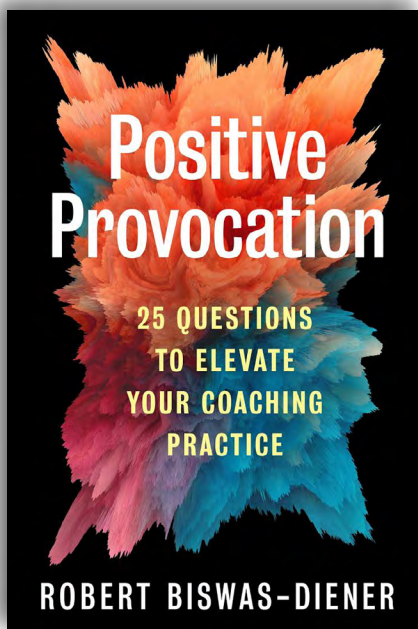
The Shelf In Focus

Earned Beliefs: Biswas-Diener's Questions for Coaching's Orthodoxy

Arne-Per Heurberg

"We have an ethical obligation to question every part of our practice, particularly those parts we take for granted."

~ Wendy-Ann Smith

In *Positive Provocation*, Robert Biswas-Diener courageously embraces the role of provocateur, offering coaches an approach to critically examine and take ownership of their practice. He provides coaches with tools to overcome dogma in the coaching field while supporting their ethical responsibility and personal desire for continuous improvement.

Biswas-Diener shares one of his favorite definitions of coaching as "conversations designed to engage the client in self-directed learning" (p. xii). The book's structure is highly aligned with this viewpoint. This isn't some antagonistic heterodoxical intervention. He begins with a brief exploration of provocation. What is required to be able to add the 'positive' to it is issuing a challenge without invalidating existing views. Biswas-Diener employs an approach he calls taking the "90-degree view," an approach that hits a sweet spot, acknowledging existing beliefs while still

being new and challenging enough to ignite insight.

With this understanding, he outlines the Positive Provocation Framework (PPF). The PPF consists of balancing three components: 'Openness to argument, Novelty of argument, and Strength of argument,' leading to a place where a safe relationship is created, one with an important distinction- safe is "not safe from challenge but safe enough *to be* challenged" (p. xv). Biswas-Diener is emphatic that the book itself is a positive provocation that will mirror the coaching process.

Implementation suggestions are included that can be customized to the individual reader. The book's structure supports both a linear and random approach. There are 25 initial provocations organized thematically, each including practical experiments. His recommendations include engaging the provocations' information, executing experiments, and investigating the potential

incorporation of learning.

Each provocation is thoughtfully curated to address core coaching tenets, providing opportunities to learn and earn ownership of one's current position in their practice. The framework fosters an informed, and vibrant environment for the coach to engage with the considerations essential for maturation. There is a consistent commitment to contributing to and elevating the coach and the coaching culture along with them, one consideration at a time, with a process that cultivates the agility necessary to anchor conclusions. That is until the next time the coach revisits the provocation, of course.

Biswas-Diener believes that "in considering the provocations in this book- regardless of whether you change your mind or if they simply reinforce your current beliefs - you will be better for having gone through the process of reflection" (p. xvii). While this is a clear triumph throughout the book because of the specific provocations, and this was certainly empirically true of all the readers I surveyed, it still seems like we need to ask–how will we be better? And maybe even, is there really an imperative to be better?

A quick review of the major coaching credentialing bodies provides a resounding yes and an ethical responsibility. Couldn't we meet this 'better' with greater command of competencies, adding frameworks or assessments, or meeting continuing education requirements? All are necessary, but are they sufficient? Maybe, but Biswas-Diener seems unconvinced other than perhaps as an offset to a natural progress gap or some kind of decline. Why?

The 'better' that is proposed by Biswas-Diener might be best captured with a partial examination of Provocation 1: "Why Is It So Hard to Be a Great Coach?" (p. 3). In the provocation, he explores multiple concepts, including professional proficiency, mindset, and coaching culture which is an example of the typical information component of each provocation. Here though, he actually offers a coordinate system for proficiency and excellence. Biswas-Diener characterizes a great coach as:

> "Great coaches engage in *deep reflective*

practice, can handle complicated situations, innovate new techniques, notice critical coaching moments, have accurate *self-knowledge*, and have developed excellent professional intuition. That is, they make great choices about which directions might be most fruitful and about which techniques to use and in which moments." [emphasis added] (p. 5).

The quote highlights the path we are on in elevating our practice and what aspects of 'better' Biswas-Diener is confident about. This focus on excellence doesn't ignore the well-being that comes from simply taking ownership of our path. So go deep to elevate (i.e., get better). Biswas-Diener provides a powerful tool for building that deep practice that elevates our coaching as we journey on our path of improvement *toward* greatness. The tool's configuration also provides us with the mechanism for anchoring that self-knowledge—we have earned our immediate place on our path by actively working to own our current beliefs. In doing so, we are also reinforcing our ethical maturation.

Biswas-Diener has poured himself into this book. His passion for education and the transparency of his personal provocations are on full tilt, making the material and process engaging and eminently accessible. If there is any critique to be found at all, it might be only in the occasional provocation that focuses more rapidly than others on some detail of which he is particularly fond. Even then, there hasn't always been a consensus on which those are. It is a minor thing. He draws from a wide range of sources, which provides a robust resource in its own right. Each chapter has baseline experiments, which ensures engagement will easily endure beyond the reading.

As a leader of the Positive Provocateurs, Biswas-Diener provides an innovative and robust framework along with practical tools for constructively challenging beliefs. Positive Provocation is a must-have for any coach who is committed to enjoying the richest experience as they evolve their coaching practice, and positively impact their colleagues and the coaching space in general. It should also be requisite for any institution that certifies coaches and is committed to keeping coaching vibrant. By preparing students for what comes after competency, it will help coaching concepts remain dynamic and minimize orthodoxy.

TITLE: Positive Provocation:
 25 Questions to Elevate Your Coaching Practice
AUTHOR: Robert Biswas-Diener
PUBLISHER: Berrett-Koehler Publishers
PUBLICATION DATE: June 20, 2023
PAPERBACK PRICE: $27.95
ISBN 10: 1523003936
ISBN 13: 978-1523003938

Arne-Per Heurberg
E: apheurberg@apdot.com
LI: https://www.linkedin.com/in/
arneperheurberg/

Arne-Per Heurberg, known as "Per," is a seasoned generalist with over two decades of experience in coaching, consulting, and advising. Founder of The Coaches Coalition and APDOT LLC, which includes the health and wellness division Resilience Rogue, he leverages his multidisciplinary background in Physics and Philosophy from UCLA to foster growth and drive impactful change through values-based approaches and ethical decision-making.

Ethical Sparks

Playful Wisdom for an Intentional Life Well-Lived

Welcome to Ethical Sparks, where wisdom meets playfulness! Explore diverse ethics in daily life with creative insights, reflective wisdom, and a touch of fun. Whether tackling dilemmas or picking up quick tips, this section sparks thoughtful reflection and inspires action. Dive in and ignite your ethical imagination!

Ethics in the Wild

Real-world ethical dilemmas explored.

The Office Gossip

You overhear gossip about a colleague who isn't around. Do you join in or stay quiet?

How does your decision impact your relationships?

Thoughtful Sage

Wisdom of the Ages

"Virtue, then, is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e., the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it."

Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics (Book II, Chapter 6)

The Ethics Meme

Serious Ethics with a Fun Vibe
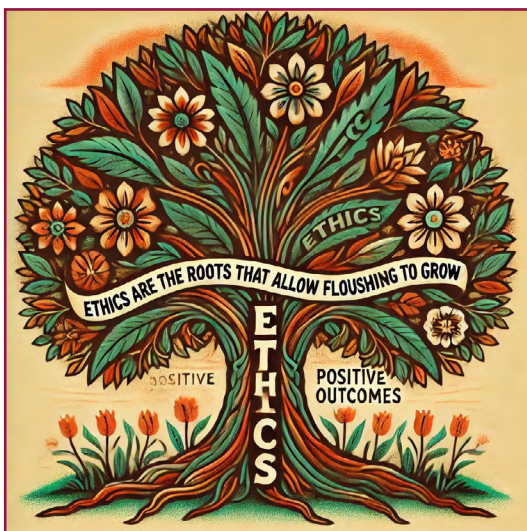
Rooted in Ethics:The Foundation of Positive Outcomes

Ethical Factoids

Bite-Sized Wisdom

Did you know that Akrasia plays a significant role in ethics by challenging the assumption that moral knowledge necessarily leads to moral action. It raises important questions about moral responsibility, free will, and the nature of human agency. The concept forces us to consider whether individuals can be fully accountable for actions that contradict their rational understanding of what is right, and it highlights the tension between reason and desire in ethical decision-making. Akrasia also underscores the importance of moral development, as overcoming this weakness of will is essential for cultivating virtue and aligning actions with ethical principles.

Share Your Ethical Sparks!
Email us at : ethicalsparks@ethicaledgeinsights.com

"Coaches, mentors, and leaders are stewards of humanity's potential, nurturing a world where integrity and compassion lead the way. Courage is the currency required to align our actions for the wellbeing and sustainability of humanity."

~ Wendy-Ann Smith **EEi**

ETHICAL EDGE Insights
Coaching | Mentoring | Leadership

To join our community, visit us at www.ethicaledgeinsights.com.
Connect with us on LinkedIn at linkedin.com/company/ethical-edge-insights

Have questions or want to contribute?
Reach out to us at info@ethicaledgeinsights.com

EEi